



THE MARINE INITIATIVE * FRESHWATER INITIATIVE
MATCHING GRANTS PROGRAM
Request for Proposals – March 2003

Community-Based Habitat Restoration Grants

The Marine and Freshwater Initiatives are pleased to announce the third cycle of a matching grants program. The grants program results from a three-year national cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Marine Initiative and the Freshwater Initiative, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Restoration Center.

The objective of NOAA's and TNC's Community-Based Restoration Program (CRP) is to bring together citizens, public and non-profit organizations, watershed groups, industry, corporations and businesses, youth conservation corps, students, landowners, and local government, state, and Federal agencies to implement habitat restoration projects to benefit NOAA trust resources (anadromous, estuarine, and marine species and their habitats). This innovative program recognizes the significant role that partnerships can play in making habitat restoration happen within communities, and acknowledges that habitat restoration is often best implemented through technical and monetary support provided at a community level. (Visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/community> or http://www.conserveonline.org/2002/05/w/Year_2_RFP for more information, or to learn about projects that have been funded in the past.)

FY2003-2004 is the third year during which we will offer matching grants. All conservation areas in states and territories are eligible to compete for these grants to restore or enhance anadromous, estuarine, and marine species and their habitats (i.e. NOAA Trust Resources). For this coming year, approximately \$430,000 in NOAA funds are available. At the end of year three, progress will be assessed. If strong, mutually beneficial opportunities continue to exist, TNC will re-apply to NOAA to continue the partnership and funding.

Matching Requirements

The NOAA-TNC national partnership provides seed money to individual projects that leverage funds and other contributions from the public and private sector to implement locally important habitat restoration that benefits living marine resources. Participating projects are expected to demonstrate a minimum 1:1 match. The match can come from a variety of public and private sources and can include in-kind goods and services. ***Note however that neither Federal funds nor Federal funds passed through state agencies are eligible to be used as matching funds.***

Administrative and Reporting Requirements

Awards are expected to be made in the latter half of 2003. Upon notification of an award, projects will be assigned a Marine Initiative budget center number to use for project expenses.

Upon award notification, projects will also be informed as to required financial and programmatic reporting requirements. This information will assist TNC in meeting Federal guidelines for reporting expenses and project status on a semi-annual basis.

Proposal Requirements and Submission

Specifications for Community-Based Habitat Restoration Grants are detailed in the following pages. **Proposals are due by May 30, 2003** by e-mail (preferred), or by hard copy to:

Rob Wilder
Marine Initiative
The Nature Conservancy
Long Marine Laboratory
100 Shaffer Road
University of California
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

831/459-1460 (phone)
831/459-3383 (fax)
rwilder@tnc.org (email)

Rob should also be contacted with any questions related to this grants program.

COMMUNITY-BASED HABITAT RESTORATION GRANTS 2003-2004

Proposal Requirements

NOAA-TNC Partnership

TNC's mission is to protect representative biodiversity and the lands and waters that they need to survive. Our greatest strength lies in our effectiveness at conserving biodiversity at the local level. Our "conservation process" consists of four fundamental components: setting *priorities* through ecoregional planning; developing *strategies* to abate threats at both single and multiple conservation areas; taking direct conservation *action*; and measuring conservation *success* (*Conservation by Design* 2000).

In the past, TNC focused primarily on terrestrial conservation. However, with the new Marine Initiative and the Freshwater Initiative, we have begun focusing more of our efforts on marine and aquatic conservation. These efforts are growing rapidly and are essential because our mission requires that we address conservation of biodiversity in all environments. Additionally, *Conservation by Design* requires us to explicitly consider and sustain the ecological linkages among terrestrial, freshwater, and marine systems.

TNC's conservation process has brought heightened awareness of coastal and marine ecosystems and the many species, such as anadromous fish, that require these habitats during part of their lives. This process has also highlighted the fact that many coastal and marine sites require restoration (see Appendix III) to function properly. As a result, TNC's Marine Initiative and the Freshwater Initiative have begun vigorously promoting aquatic conservation practices, including habitat restoration under the NOAA/TNC partnership.

Grant Amounts

This year, typical grants will be in the range of \$25,000-\$75,000. These grant amounts must, at a minimum, be matched 1:1 with non-federal funds,. These are one-year grants. Multi-year projects will need to re-apply annually.

This will be a competitive process. The merits of each proposal will be weighed based on how closely the project aligns with the national partnership's evaluation criteria.

Elements of Successful Project Proposals

Projects with the following elements in place should consider submitting a proposal:

- Project is fully aligned with *Conservation by Design*. This means:
 - It is part of a priority conservation area as identified through TNC's ecoregional planning process. If an ecoregional plan has not yet been completed, the project must be identified as a high priority by the state or territorial chapter.

- It is included as part of a site conservation plan, or conservation area, that identifies restoration as a primary strategy for achieving conservation success.
- It should identify, or is prepared to address, short and long-term measures of success.
- Project implementation will result in tangible restoration of living marine resources. This diversity includes anadromous and marine species and their habitats.
- Project involves significant community engagement and support that is tied to the restoration activities. This should be done to ensure the community is aware of restoration activities, it feels ownership in specific projects, and can voice any concerns there may be.
- Project concept involves good interaction with the NOAA regional representative throughout it's development; a list of the NOAA local contacts is provided in Appendix 1.
- Project is staffed by a local project director.
- Project involves partners.
- Project must have the ability to provide a minimum 1:1 non-federal match.

Proposal Contents

If the project qualifies, a proposal should be submitted to Rob Wilder in TNC's Marine Initiative and Freshwater Initiative no later than May 30, 2003. ***Proposals should be no longer than five pages, and be prepared in conjunction with your assigned TNC Grants Specialist. You are also strongly encouraged to consult with your appropriate NOAA Community-based Restoration Program Regional Contact, from early-on in the process.***

Minimum information to be provided in a project proposal includes:

BASIC INFORMATION

- Project Name
- Contact Person (address, phone, fax, email)
- Congressional District
- Regional NOAA Contact Staff Person

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Location (include project zip code)
- Relevant Maps or Photos (may be included as appendices)
- Land Ownership (public and private)
- Anticipated Benefits to Species and Habitat(s)
- Desired Future Conditions (in measurable terms where appropriate)
- Partners Involved
- 1-2 paragraph Project Abstract

WORK PLAN

- Start and End Date
- Restoration Methodology
- Timeline for Anticipated Actions

- Identification of the mechanism that will be used, by TNC or a partner, to ensure that necessary environmental permits and consultations will be secured prior to the use of Federal funds.
- Project-specific Benchmarks for Measuring Short-Term Success
- Description of Long-Term Success Measures
- Community Engagement (may include: hands-on training and restoration activities undertaken by volunteers; sponsorship from local entities, either through in-kind goods and services or cash contributions; public education and outreach; and/or support from state and local governments)

PROJECTED BUDGET AND NARRATIVE (see Appendix II)

- Completed *One-Year Projected Budget Template*
- Grant Amount Requested
- Match Amount (1:1, non-federal is required.)
- Source(s) of Match (confirmed and pending)
- Justification For Fund Use (as listed in projected budget) and a budget narrative

Evaluation Criteria

Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Technical merit and project feasibility;
- Extent to which project benefits living marine resources and persist over the long-term;
- Monitoring and long-term maintenance plan;
- Community involvement, education, and stewardship;
- Budget justification, detail, and cost-effectiveness;
- Degree of support from and involvement with, the regional NOAA contact person.

Preference will be given to projects containing:

- Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as identified by NOAA Fisheries, and areas within EFH identified as Habitat Areas of Particular Concern;
- Areas identified as critical habitat for federally or state listed anadromous, estuarine, and marine species;
- Areas identified as important habitat for marine mammals and turtles;
- Watersheds or other such areas under special management by state coastal management programs; and,
- Other important commercial or recreational anadromous and marine fish habitat.

Project Evaluation and Selection

Together, NOAA and TNC are selecting projects that will receive support from this innovative national partnership. This selection process will take place in two steps. In the first step, the Marine Initiative and the Freshwater Initiative will perform a preliminary review and narrow the project proposals submitted to those that most closely meet the qualifications and evaluation criteria. In the second step, NOAA Headquarters, the NOAA regional staff, and TNC will then review, evaluate, and select final projects with the goal of funding roughly ten projects .

In the first two years of this partnership, many projects have been funded for a broad range of activities - from oyster reef restoration, to restoring marsh hydrology, to a partial dam removal in order to restore anadromous species access to inland habitats, to removing invasive species from estuaries, to new shellfish sanctuaries which can also restore water quality and prevent brown tides, to local partnerships with other NGOs in support of community-based restoration.

APPENDIX I

NOAA COMMUNITY-BASED RESTORATION PROGRAM REGIONAL CONTACTS

NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program Contacts

NMFS Headquarters CRP Staff:

(301) - 713-0174

Robin Bruckner x 208, Tisa Shostik x209.

NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation

Habitat Restoration Division

1315 East West Highway

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Silver Spring, MD 20910

FY2003-2004 - NOAA Community-based Restoration Program Field Contacts

Alaska Projects:

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APPENDIX II

ONE-YEAR PROJECTED BUDGET TEMPLATE (October 1, 2003 – September 30, 2004) **PROPOSED COMMUNITY-BASED HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT**

FUNDS	REQUESTED GRANT FUNDS (NOAA)	TNC MATCH (state whether confirmed or pending)	Third-Party In- Kind Match (State if confirmed or pending)	PURPOSE (briefly state and elaborate in narrative)
Personnel				
Fringe Benefits (full-time @ 38.5% short-term @ 8.5%)				
Travel				
Equipment				
Supplies				
Contractual				
Other				
Total Direct Expenses				
TOTAL				

* Proposals are not to include indirect costs due to the nature of the matching grants program.

NARRATIVE. Provide detail on how the amounts listed above (in all columns) will be used to meet

the goals of this project. Also address where confirmed or potential sources of match will come from.

APPENDIX III

DEFINITION OF RESTORATION & REPRESENTATIVE ACTIVITIES

TNC's definition of "restoration" closely mirrors that published by the National Research Council in their book on Restoration of Aquatic Ecosystems:

"Restoration is defined as the return of an ecosystem to a close approximation of its condition prior to disturbance. In restoration, ecological damage to the resource is repaired. Both the structure and the functions of the ecosystem are recreated. Merely recreating the form without the functions, or the functions in an artificial configuration bearing little resemblance to a natural resource, does not constitute restoration. The goal is to emulate a natural, functioning, self-regulating system that is integrated with the ecological landscape in which it occurs. Often, natural resource restoration requires one or more of the following processes: reconstruction of antecedent physical hydrologic and morphologic conditions; chemical cleanup or adjustment of the environment; and biological manipulation, including revegetation and the reintroduction of absent or currently nonviable native species."

An illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of possible restoration activities to be funded under this national partnership might include:

- Restoring marsh, wetland, seagrass, or riparian communities through revegetation, invasive plant control, natural recontouring of the landscape, removing levees and artificial drainage systems, and related activities.

- Restoring native populations of aquatic organisms through re-introductions and control of invasive plant and animal species.
- Working with landowners or managers to restore water clarity, quality, and natural flow of fresh and saltwater.
- Working with water managers to restore natural volumes and timing of freshwater flows through rivers and into estuarine and coastal areas, and to remove or reduce the impacts of barriers to the movement of aquatic organisms in rivers and estuaries.
- Working with coastal and freshwater management authorities to effect ecologically compatible dredging, channelization, shoreline protection, and related activities.